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F I L E *Lessons* 5

MEMORANDUM FOR: Executive Director-Comptroller
 Inspector General
 Deputy Director for Support
 SUBJECT : Agency Attrition Study

1. The attached Study looks at separations within the Agency, the Directorates and selected Career Services in six different ways--age, grade, sex, years of service, occupational categories and reasons. Findings are based upon historical comparisons of these factors, between FY 1968 and an average of three Fiscal Years (1966 through 1968).
2. The Report is a statistical overview of the general nature and characteristics of the nearly [] separations that occur annually. It points up certain matters of major concern to management and charts the course for further study and inquiry.
3. I believe the findings and observations in the Report are logical interpretations of the statistical aggregates upon which they are based. In addition to this general remark, I wish to make the following specific comments concerning certain items in the Report.
- a. I consider the Agency's investment in its new employees, both clericals and professionals, to be of such importance that we should seek to obtain the managerial improvements that can be expected from a thorough understanding of attrition causes and effects. As in the case of preventive medicine, attrition management is a positive form of personnel management.
- b. While further study of the unanswered questions raised in the Study is indicated, it should be noted that progress, using current data available, will be time-consuming, e.g., the attached Study took several months to complete and involved the manual collection and calculation of many thousands of individual digits. I estimate that the next phase of study will take four months to complete from the date it is begun.
- c. With regard to the observation in the Study that periodic reporting of significant changes is basic to attrition comprehension and control, I quite agree. Attached is a suggested format for quarterly variance reporting to your offices, and I propose that copies be given to the Directorates and Career Services of those portions covering their respective jurisdictions. Since preparation of the reports should be accomplished by machine, your views on the value of the attached document would be helpful in determining whether we should proceed with this undertaking.
- d. The Study's finding that we annually lose almost two-thirds of GS personnel under age 20 (no more than 1/3 of this total is attributable to disqualifications in IAS) is a compelling observation.

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I will discuss this matter with Mr. [redacted] and others in my office in order to determine if and how we can effectively restrict the current volume of employment of 18 and 19 year old clericals. I also agree that we should closely watch the careers of young clerical and professional employees during the first two years, because of the heavy losses sustained in these periods, but I will defer the initiation of specific changes in this regard until after we complete our further study of attrition.

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Robert S. Wattles
Director of Personnel

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Approved For Release 2003/04/29 : CIA-RDP84-00780R002300070007-5

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Approved For Release 2003/04/29 : CIA-RDP84-00780R002300070007-5